

forefront of this storm, and I am so grateful for the Border Patrol leading this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Chief Skero a wonderful retirement. It is well-deserved.

ENDING CHILD LABOR IN COCOA AND CHOCOLATE INDUSTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is time to discuss the steps we must take to end child labor in the cocoa and chocolate industry.

This issue was brought to my attention by the students at Bell Elementary School in Chicago. Through the guidance of their teacher, Mr. Barash, these students learned the disturbing relationship between child labor and chocolate production.

□ 1015

During my visit with their class, they shared with me their concern for children who are forced into child labor in this industry. Some of these children are sold to traffickers or farm owners or are abducted only to be taken to cocoa farms for work. Some do not see their families again for years—some never again.

Most children in the industry begin their days before the sun rises and end it long after the sun sets. They are forced to wield dangerous machetes while climbing up and down trees to cut down bean pods. Then they must carry the pods in sacks weighing more than 100 pounds through the forest. If the children don't work fast enough, the farm owners beat them. When they are finally able to rest, they must sleep on wooden planks in small, windowless buildings with little or no access to clean water.

Many of these children will never attend school or receive an education. The passionate elementary schoolers who told me about this made the compelling case that we must eradicate child labor from this industry and make sure these children are no longer forced into dangerous, unlawful working conditions.

How can we justify all of this for the sake of chocolate?

I am not the first Member of this body to be concerned about these practices. This fight was first taken up in Congress by former Representative Eliot Engel of New York who worked to establish a labeling standard to indicate on chocolate products that no child labor had been used in its production.

While this effort did not succeed, he was joined by former Senator Tom Harkin to establish what we call the Harkin-Engel Protocol. This protocol was an agreement between governments, chocolate companies, and cocoa producers to eliminate the worst forms of child labor within cocoa production.

While the protocol has been effective, this problem persists. In 2015, 14 years

after the protocol's signing, the Department of Labor reported that more than 2 million children were engaged in child labor in cocoa growing regions of West Africa. Although the chocolate industry made a promise to end child labor almost 20 years ago, today, no company can guarantee their products are free of child labor. While chocolate producers have shown some concern for the lives of these children through dedicated funding to eradicate child labor in their industry, it has simply not been enough.

The three largest chocolate suppliers in the world are not even able to identify the farms where their cocoa is being produced. As Americans, we must recognize that much of the chocolate we enjoy is harvested and produced at the expense of these young children.

We cannot let this continue. Kids should be in schools. Kids should be playing. Kids should be with friends. Kids should be kids.

After speaking with the children at Bell Elementary, I was proud to take the first step in the Labor-HHS and Education appropriations bill by including language to reinvigorate the Department of Labor's role in the international Child Labor Cocoa Coordinating Group and to hold the companies in countries involved accountable for the promises they made almost 20 years ago under the Harkin-Engel Protocol. But there is still much to do.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress and Secretary Walsh to bring an end to child labor in the cocoa industry. I also want to acknowledge the amazing 12 and 13 year olds who brought this to my attention and are fighting for children they don't know halfway across the world. Standing with these students and working to further their mission is why I am proud to be a Member of this body: to ensure that students like this have their voices heard by Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to going back to Chicago and the Bell Elementary students to tell them that Congress is listening.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, it has been obvious for years now that we need to rethink our forest management strategies.

2020 was the worst fire season on record for California and much of the West. California alone saw 4.2 million acres of land burned. Currently, there are 85 large fires burning across the West and already 1½ million acres burnt.

Last week the smoke reached all the way to Washington, D.C., causing health advisories for people not to be outside if they either have health issues or for athletic purposes in D.C. and Baltimore. The plume even reached all the way up to New York.

The U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior have identified more than 80 million acres that are overgrown and at a high risk of fire.

As wildfires burn across California and the West, Republicans have several bill proposals before this House that would improve forest management. These bills propose comprehensive solutions to address the declining health of our forests and help prevent catastrophic wildfires by expediting the environmental analysis, reducing frivolous lawsuits, and increasing the pace and scale of management practices.

We have suppressed fires for over 110 years which is okay on the surface, but now most forests are intensely overstocked and overgrown with the fuel that causes the fires because we didn't do the other side of the coin: the harvest work, the treatment, and the removing of materials.

For example, in California most forest types had in the past about 64 trees per acre in the mid-1800s. Now they sit at over 300 trees per acre or more, causing weak trees that are more susceptible to insects and ultimately death because they don't have enough water supply, and so this in itself exacerbates the drought within the forest with all the competition of trees per acre and the death of the trees themselves.

One of my bills, the CLEAR Zones Act, would allow better clearing around power lines. It would allow a wider buffer to prevent trees from falling on the lines and igniting a fire which is what they do. A tree falling into power lines lately was likely the cause of the Dixie fire, currently the largest fire burning in California. So far it has burned right around 200,000 acres in my district, and it is only 22 percent contained.

This is hitting the area north of the Camp fire that burned in 2018. As you might remember from history, Mr. Speaker, it burned the town of Paradise, part of Magalia, Concow, and Yankee Hill, this large area here.

Then following up in 2020 was the North Complex fire. They are burning up against each other basically over history here. And now we have the Dixie fire, as it is known, along with a smaller one called the Fly fire which have burned together. Pretty soon the whole landscape is going to have a history of having burned.

For what reason?

It is because we won't manage the lands. We won't do what needs to be done to put the kind of buffers and the kind of zones in that would help make it easier for the firefighters.

Well, the solutions we do have are: we have proper forest management. We have seen that in this area here, around this current Dixie fire.

The Collins Pine Company based in Chester, California, and a lot of areas in northern California, has done a lot of free work along highways around the community that would be very, very helpful and ultimately will be very helpful towards the type of management that will make us fire-safe.

The thinning that is done along the highways and around the towns is what has made it possible for the firefighters in a very difficult situation—on the just seen Dixie fire, on my map there—to have a chance to stop this fire finally. It has ravaged so much, and they have done an amazing job of protecting communities and homes in those areas.

But it has turned from a fire where a tree hit a power line—we are still waiting for the forensic report on that—from a small, half-acre fire and just a couple weeks later 200,000 acres and all this endangerment.

So work that had been done previously by Collins Pine is going to probably save the day for the town of Chester and others up in that direction.

So if we dramatically increase the fuel treatments across all these landscapes, then it gives us a fighting chance. We need to thin the forest and return low-intensity fire to these landscapes in the form also of a prescribed fire at a time of year when we can control them. The Native Americans used to use this method, and we can learn from them.

This map of fuels treatment projects around the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, overlaid with the satellite image of the 2018 Carr fire burn scar, shows that where the fuels were managed the fire was less intense. The green area has been highlighted to show a better contrast. The areas that had been thinned did not burn nearly as intensely. Instead, the big trees survived, the fire goes through the area at the bottom of the forest much more slowly, and it is much more manageable. The upper areas are the ones that burned to a crisp.

So this map shows that forest management works and that thinning works. We need to increase the pace and scale of this type of project so when fires come, the landscape is ready, and it doesn't endanger our firefighters and our communities unnecessarily.

Fire will happen. It is going to happen whether it is a manmade accident or nature with lightning strikes and the things that happen there. It is going to happen.

But what are we going to do to address that?

If we want to talk about change of temperatures and the drought situation we are facing in the West, we have to do even more to address overgrown forests and the amount of inventory per acre a forest can handle. Basically, all these trees in an overloaded forest are called ladder fuels. The fires will be lower intensity if we do the right work. They are easier to put out and much less devastating. Indeed, it is the natural landscape we used to have over 100 years ago when fire was actually constructive.

TWENTY YEARS OF THE CLINTON FOUNDATION HEADQUARTERS IN HARLEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 20-year anniversary of the Clinton Foundation opening its headquarters in Harlem, USA. For the past two decades, the Clinton Foundation has been at the heart of the Harlem community, empowering local businesses and working to improve the neighborhood. This is, as you know, Mr. Speaker, an iconic neighborhood in the United States, and it is the center of the African diaspora in the United States, if not the world.

Throughout their time in Harlem, the Clinton Foundation has helped facilitate the microfinancing of 136,000 low-income women entrepreneurs. It has created sustainable models to help foster entrepreneurship, and it has undertaken critical projects to address inequalities in this community.

From 2002 to 2013, the foundation operated the Clinton Economic Opportunity Initiative, offering technical and managerial support to local entrepreneurs. However, the work did not stop at the boundaries of Harlem. In fact, in 2013, the foundation expanded their mission of unlocking opportunity and addressing inequality across our country and the world.

Due to the extraordinary work of the foundation, 430 million people in more than 180 countries have benefited from the Clinton Global Initiative. Twenty-one million people now have access to lifesaving HIV/AIDS medications, 1.2 million children's books have been distributed to under-resourced communities across the world, and 71 megawatts of clean energy projects have been facilitated in small island nations.

In the face of the pandemic, the Clinton Global Initiative also launched Action Network which brings together leaders from business, government, and philanthropic sectors to take action and address inequalities facing historically excluded groups.

Now, as we look to the challenges of the next 20 years, we know that the Clinton Foundation will continue to sharpen their focus on partnership building, expanding upon new horizons, and empowering more and more communities.

I want to commend the Clinton Foundation on their prodigious work of the past 20 years and their strong presence in the village of Harlem and thank former President Clinton and former Secretary Clinton for their continued dedication to furthering humanity and prioritizing historically excluded and underserved communities.

FREE CUBA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from

New York (Ms. MALLIOTAKIS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MALLIOTAKIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to talk to you about why it is important to me and why it should be important to the American people that we support those in Cuba who are fighting right now for their future, for their freedom, for democracy, for human rights, and for dignity.

I am the daughter of a Cuban refugee. My mother came to this great country in 1959 to escape the oppression of the Castro regime. Sadly, my family had been split apart, and my grandfather had remained in Cuba to stay with his small businesses. He had two gas stations there, and the regime had come in and taken his businesses and his home. Unfortunately, my family never really reconnected.

As we look at what is happening right now in this island that is just 90 miles from our shore, it is incredibly important to note the role that Cuba has played in spreading communism and socialism throughout the Western Hemisphere. They have aligned themselves with the most dangerous nations—our adversaries—across the world from Iran to China to Venezuela to Russia and to North Korea. Mr. Speaker, you see them all right now at this moment propping up this Communist regime.

□ 1030

We, the leader of the free world, must stand with the Cuban people at this moment. We have a moment in history that is very similar to what Ronald Reagan faced in 1987 with the Iron Curtain. This is our Berlin Wall moment. The people in Cuba, my family included, have suffered for six decades under a brutal murderous regime.

Tens of thousands of people have died at the hands of the Castro brothers. Many, many more have been jailed and beaten simply for peacefully protesting communism and wanting to live in freedom.

This regime has also played a very important role, unfortunately, in spreading communism in the Western Hemisphere, as I mentioned. We saw Venezuela, one of the richest nations in South America, be destroyed by Hugo Chavez, Nicolas Maduro, propped up by the Castro regime. We see it going into Nicaragua, Bolivia, and even here in the United States of America.

And I can tell you, firsthand, in New York City, how painful it was to me to see the communist symbol, the hammer and sickle, painted on our government buildings last summer. If we end communism in Cuba, we end its spread in the Western Hemisphere. And that is what we as the American people, freedom-loving Americans, should be doing at this moment in time.

And there is a reason why the Cuban people are marching in the streets right now holding the American flag. It is because we are that symbol of freedom, that beacon of hope and opportunity, and we must rise to the occasion, garner support from our allies,